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Public Opinion...

Reader's Letter Draws Comment From Rickett, Who's In Seattle

To The Herald Statesman:

I recently saw in your newspaper a letter from Richard P. Niesz, in which he objected to U. S. newspapers' handling of the news of my release.

I am certain that Mr. Niesz is a conscientious American citizen, and the views which he expressed are not merely held by himself alone. I also was a little annoyed at the tendency toward a sensationalizing of my case. However, there are some places where I must disagree with Mr. Niesz.

FIRST, he feels that, if what I did was espionage, then every foreigner in every country must be an agent, because it is something any patriotic citizen would do.

I feel that there is a great deal of difference between a man who, after having lived or traveled abroad, in the event of an attack upon his country, offers his knowledge and information to his government, and the man who, while living abroad, deliberately and systematically collects information in order to help the overthrow of the government of the country in which he is a guest.

This is exactly what I was doing. Though I do not approve of the sort of activity Mr. Niesz' firm was engaged in, either, I do not think one can compare providing information to wartime Britain, which had no intention of overthrowing our government or even seriously intervening in our affairs, with my providing information to the American Consulate in Peking, which represented a government openly trying to overthrow that of the Chinese by providing arms and money to Chiang Kai-shek and occupying Formosa, a government whose CIA openly boasts of spending millions of dollars every year carrying on espionage and sabotage in the China mainland.

SECOND, he feels that I did not feel it was in

the interest of our country, I now feel that I was wrong.

The new China is a reality and, whether we like it or not, we are going to have to live in the same world with it.

In doing what I did, my activities actually helped further policies which involved our country in a disastrous war, and have led to a tremendous lowering of our prestige throughout the world, especially in the Far East.

This is not to mention the billions of dollars our businessmen have lost as the result of a hopeless attempt to force the Chinese into submission by cutting off trade. I am convinced that, from a practical as well as moral point of view, it is wrong for any man to go to another country and try to force his social system upon the people there.

Whatever social system we want in our country is our business. At the same time, the Chinese must be allowed to settle their own problems without any interference from us.

AFTER SEVEN YEARS' experience in China, I am convinced the Chinese want peace as much as we do. But peace can only be based on mutual understanding.

We cannot blame the Chinese if, when we continue to send spies and saboteurs into their country and actively intervene in their internal affairs, they should distrust our motives.

Unless the principles of peaceful negotiation and noninterference in other people's affairs become the basis for all international relations, we are faced with the inevitability of the cold war being continued until it blows up into a catastrophe which may mean the end of all mankind.

I am certain neither Mr. Niesz nor any other patriotic American wants that any more than I.

WALTER ALLYN RICKETT,
300 Walnut Avenue,
Seattle, Wash.